

Three-Dimensional Audio in the Vetronics Technology Testbed



2001 Vehicle Technologies Symposium
Intelligent Systems for the Objective Fleet
29-31 May 2001

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Report Documentation Page		
Report Date 29May2001	Report Type N/A	Dates Covered (from... to) - -
Title and Subtitle Three-Dimensional Audio in the Vetronics Technology Testbed		Contract Number
		Grant Number
		Program Element Number
Author(s) Euerle, Steve		Project Number
		Task Number
		Work Unit Number
Performing Organization Name(s) and Address(es) Advanced Simulation Technology, Inc.		Performing Organization Report Number
Sponsoring/Monitoring Agency Name(s) and Address(es) NDIA (National Defense Industrial Association) 211 Wilson BLvd., Ste. 400 Arlington, VA 22201-3061		Sponsor/Monitor's Acronym(s)
		Sponsor/Monitor's Report Number(s)
Distribution/Availability Statement Approved for public release, distribution unlimited		
Supplementary Notes Proceedings from 2001 Vehicle Technologies Symposium - Intelligent Systems for the Objective Force 29-31 May 2001 Sponsored by NDIA, The original document contains color images.		
Abstract		
Subject Terms		
Report Classification unclassified		Classification of this page unclassified
Classification of Abstract unclassified		Limitation of Abstract UU
Number of Pages 14		

Background - Who is ASTi?

- Started in 1989
- Founders from Hughes/Sperry/CAE
- Flight Simulation background
- Extensive hardware engineering capability
- Product base was PC and DSP – now many system elements
- Growing at 15% per annum



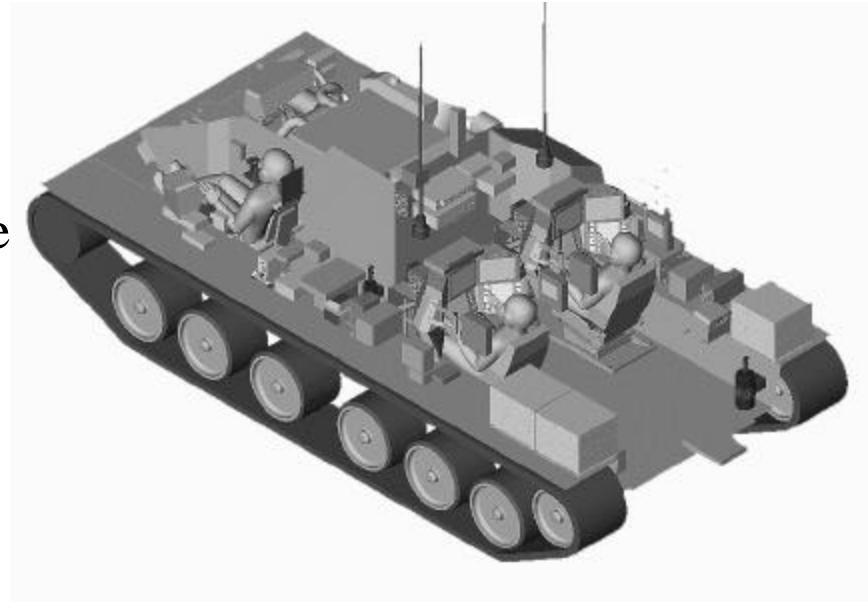
Background – What does ASTi do?

- Networked Digital Audio Communications Systems for the Simulation Industry, including:
 - DIS & HLA compatible simulated radios and intercoms
 - Aural Cues
 - Data Network → Live Radio Network bridge (Synapse)
 - Audio Record and Playback

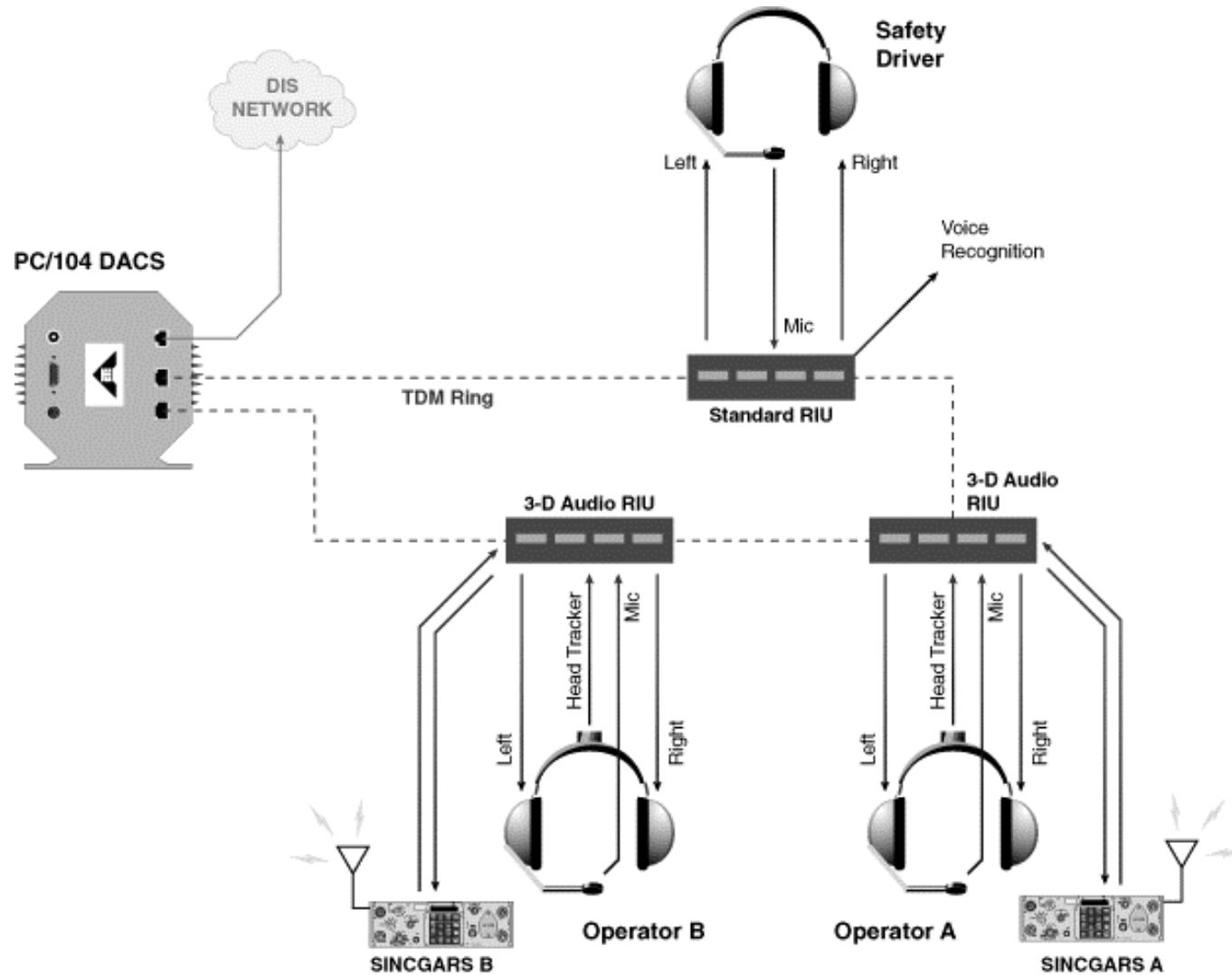


Vetronics Technology Testbed Overview

- Key Technologies
 - CA ATD Soldier Machine Interface
 - Speech recognition
 - Battlefield visualization
 - Three-dimensional (3-D) audio
 - Distributed electronics architecture
 - Embedded simulation
- Two crew stations + safety driver
 1. Command, control, communications, driving operations
 2. Target acquisition and servicing operations



ASTi Communications System on the VTT

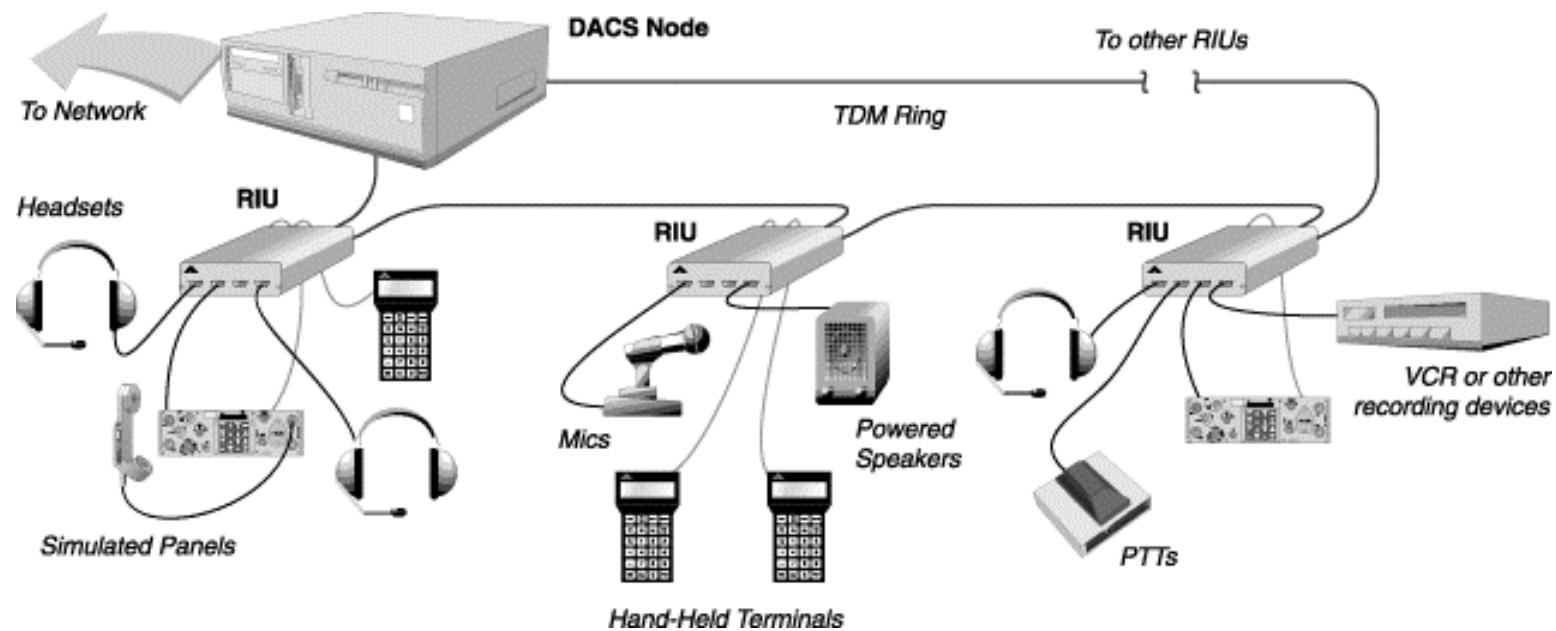


ASTi Communications System on the VTT, CTD

- Provides:
 - Crew intercoms
 - Warning tones
 - Interface to 2 live Sincgars radios
- ASTi Technologies used:
 - PC/104 form factor Digital Audio Communications System (DACS)
 - True Three-Dimensional Audio
 - Synapse technology for interface to live radios



Digital Audio Communications (DACS)



DACS Overview

- Distributed simulated radio/intercom environment
- DIS & HLA radio communication with voice compression
- Aural Cue capability
- TDM/RIU architecture allows fully digital audio distribution system
- Flexible interface supports direct connection to real audio sources



PC/104 DACS

- PC/104 form factor – industrial standard
- Compact, rugged chassis
- Made up of a “stack” of cards, cards measure 3.75” x 4.625”
- ASTi-developed custom PC/104 dsp (TDM) card, works with current RIU’s
- 64 MB compact flash storage – rugged, removable
- Same functionality as full size DACS



True 3-D Audio

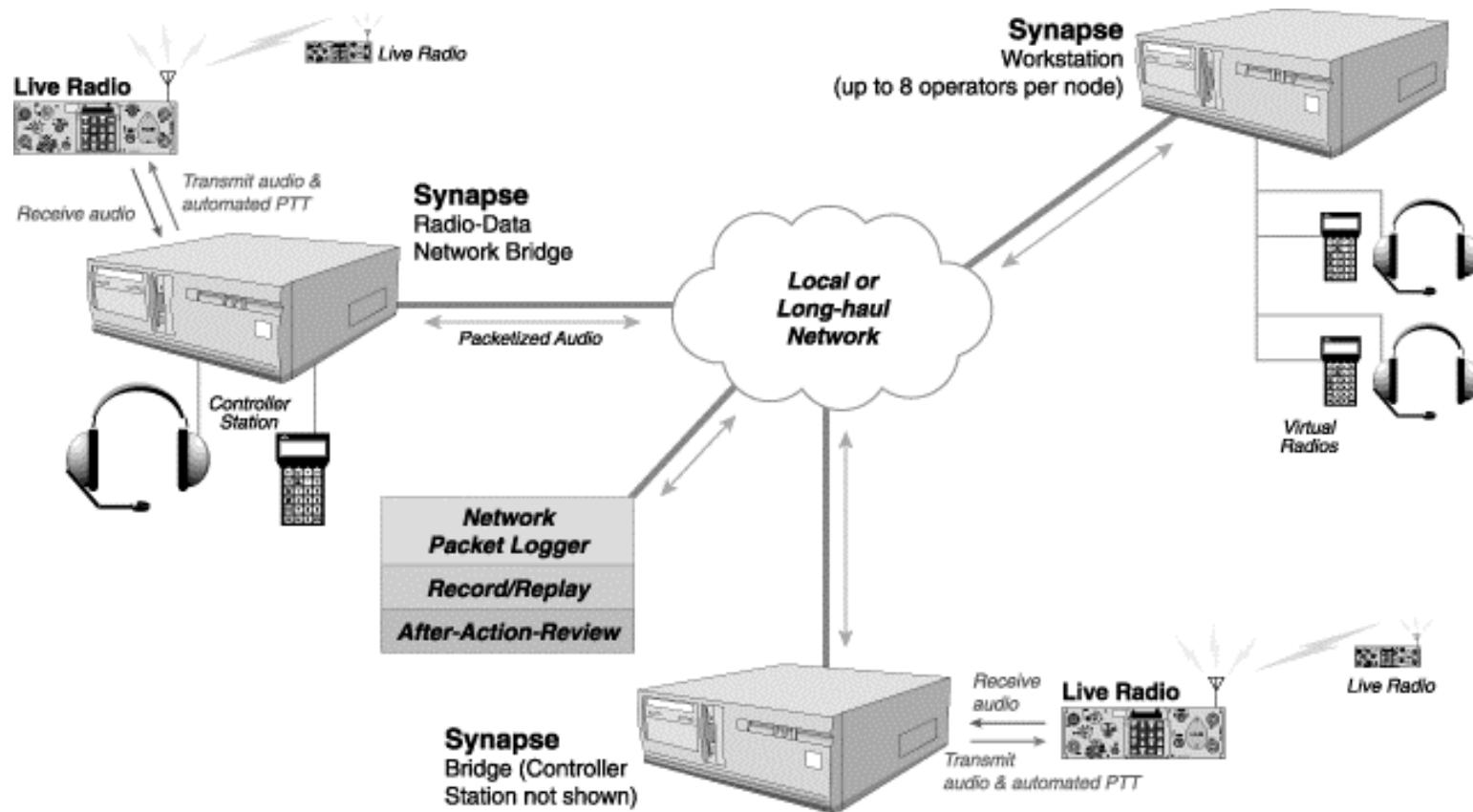
- Why 3-D audio?
 - Spatially positioned voice streams and warning tones to simplify a complex audio environment and ease operator workload
- Key component of 3-D audio processing is the Head Related Transfer Function (HRTF)
 - Relates the spectral characteristics of an acoustic source at some location in 3-D space, to the spectral characteristics of the sound that reaches the eardrum
 - ASTi teamed with Bo Gehring of Focal Point Audio Technologies to implement HRTF filters



True 3-D Audio

- Implementation:
 - RIU codec maximum sample rate increased to 32 kHz for increased fidelity
 - HRTF implemented in DSP in RIU for scalability - Number of 3-D audio streams limited by number of RIU's, not the node CPU
 - Head Tracking capability to track operators head movements and adjust sound source location accordingly

Synapse System



Synapse System

- Link between live field radios and simulation networks
 - Base station radios receive audio over the air from field radios
 - Analog audio streams from base station radio are digitized, compressed and put into Ethernet packets
 - Ethernet packets are distributed onto the DIS network
 - Packets can be received at remote Synapse nodes anywhere on the network
 - Digital stream is transformed back into analog audio, and can be broadcast out other live radios if desired
 - Audio streams can be monitored, recorded, etc.
 - Instructors at Synapse workstation can participate in voice traffic using simulated radios



Conclusions

- Successfully demonstrated 3-D audio for crew intercom, radio communications, and warning tones in the VTT using an ASTi digital comms system
- System can be used to examine merits of a 3-D audio system in crew interface design